



IHTSDO Announces Free Use of SNOMED CT in Low Income Countries

Copenhagen, Denmark: January 14, 2009 – The International Health Terminology Standards Development Organisation (IHTSDO) announced today that it will make Affiliate Licenses for the use of SNOMED CT available to users in low income countries free of charge, as they are in IHTSDO Member countries. This initiative is part of the organization's commitment to enable broader use of standardized clinical terminologies world-wide.

"Having accurate and reliable health information when and where needed saves lives and saves time," says Dr. Jennifer Zelmer, IHTSDO's chief executive officer. "By making it easier to use SNOMED CT in resource-poor settings, IHTSDO hopes to increase access to standards-based solutions that enable the safe exchange of health information."

Beginning today, health care providers and others in the 49 countries categorized as low income economies by the World Bank will be able to obtain SNOMED CT Affiliate Licenses free of charge from the IHTSDO to use the terminology in public health information systems, electronic health records, health research, and other applications as part of the initial phase of a program to expand access to SNOMED CT. Over half of the countries covered by this initiative are in Africa. The remainder are located in the Asia/Pacific and Americas regions.

"This is terrific news for the health of both poor nations and rich nations," says Dr. Sally Stansfield, executive director of the Health Metrics Network. "In a resolution passed by the World Health Assembly in May 2006, all 192 UN member nations committed to using a common Framework and standards for health information systems. Standard terminology is a crucial platform for this Framework. We are delighted by this generous and visionary decision by IHTSDO, which will accelerate progress towards both better information and better health."

Better Health Information is a Global Need

Safe and effective exchange of health information is important for patients and health care providers around the world. To deliver safe care, health professionals need to know about allergies, patients' past health problems, the medications they are taking, and other aspects of their health and health care. IHTSDO aims to make this as easy as possible by enabling the global community to share the resources and expertise needed to develop and use standardized clinical terminology in health information systems.

For example, the Millennium Villages Project (MVP) plans to use SNOMED CT in the Millennium Global Village-Network, a health information system that supports primary care in rural communities in Africa to achieve the international Millennium Development Goals. Goals include reducing the child mortality by two-thirds and halting the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015.

"The Millennium Villages Project is committed to strengthening health systems in an open and interoperable manner. We understand that a global framework or architecture for health information systems requires a standard reference terminology. We have chosen to map our dictionaries to SNOMED CT in all ten MVP countries in Sub-Saharan Africa," says Dr. Andrew Kanter, director of health information systems/medical informatics for the Millennium Villages Project.



About SNOMED CT

SNOMED Clinical Terms™ (SNOMED CT™) is a standardized terminology that can be used as the foundation for electronic health records and other applications. For example, different clinicians often use different terms to describe the same concept. SNOMED CT contains more than 310,000 unique concepts and more than 1.3 million links or relationships between them that ensure that this information is captured consistently, accurately, and reliably. The terminology is used in more than forty countries around the world. SNOMED CT was originally created by the College of American Pathologists by combining SNOMED RT and a computer-based nomenclature and classification known as Clinical Terms Version 3, formerly known as Read Codes Version 3, which was created on behalf of the UK Department of Health and is Crown copyright. To apply for an Affiliate License to use SNOMED CT under this new program, please go to <http://www.ihtsdo.org/join-us/use-snomed-ct-licenses/affiliate-license-application/>.

About International Health Terminology Standards Development Organisation (IHTSDO)

The IHTSDO (International Health Terminology Standards Development Organisation) and its Members seek to improve the health of humankind by fostering the development and use of suitable standardized clinical terminologies, notably SNOMED CT, in order to support the safe, accurate, and effective exchange of health information. Already, eleven countries have joined together to support the on-going development and maintenance of SNOMED CT and related standards. These Members share the costs on a sliding scale based on national income and make the standards freely available in their jurisdictions through Affiliate Licenses. IHTSDO also offers free access to SNOMED CT in countries that are not yet members for qualifying research projects and on humanitarian or charitable grounds. For more information, please see www.ihtsdo.org.

About the Health Metrics Network (HMN)

The Health Metrics Network (HMN) is a leading global partnership that facilitates better health information at country, regional and global levels. Based at the World Health Organisation offices in Geneva, it is funded by organizations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, USAID and the UK's Department for International Development. HMN is presently engaged in over 65 countries.

About Millennium Villages

Millennium Villages offer a scalable model for fighting poverty at the village level and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Initiatives are based on the findings of the UN Millennium Project and are implemented by the communities themselves. There are currently 79 Millennium Villages located in 10 countries in sub-Saharan Africa: Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda. The project is led by the Earth Institute at Columbia University, Millennium Promise, and the United National Development Programme (UNDP). For more information, please see www.millenniumvillages.org.

Media Contacts:

Berit Jensen or Jennifer Zelmer

IHTSDO

media@ihtsdo.org

+45 3644 8736

SNOMED, SNOMED CT, and IHTSDO are trademarks of the International Health Terminology Standards Development Organisation. All other trademarks used in this document are the property of their respective owners.



World Bank List of Low-Income Economies as of January 2009:

Afghanistan	Haiti	Rwanda
Bangladesh	Kenya	São Tomé and Príncipe
Benin	Korea, Dem Rep.	Senegal
Burkina Faso	Kyrgyz Republic	Sierra Leone
Burundi	Lao PDR	Solomon Islands
Cambodia	Liberia	Somalia
Central African Republic	Madagascar	Tajikistan
Chad	Malawi	Tanzania
Comoros	Mali	Togo
Congo, Dem. Rep	Mauritania	Uganda
Côte d'Ivoire	Mozambique	Uzbekistan
Eritrea	Myanmar	Vietnam
Ethiopia	Nepal	Yemen, Rep.
Gambia, The	Niger	Zambia
Ghana	Nigeria	Zimbabwe
Guinea	Pakistan	
Guinea-Bissau	Papua New Guinea	

Source: <http://go.worldbank.org/D7SN0B8YU0>